

# The need for solidarity



## US war plans, military bases

While US imperialism has been trying to stabilise pro-US regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, preparations have been underway for an eventual invasion of Venezuela, most likely with the help of mercenary forces in neighbouring Colombia, to seize control of Venezuela's oilfields and smash Venezuela's socialist revolution. Sound familiar?

Under the pretext of combating drugs and leftist rebels, the US has announced plans to build another seven military bases in Colombia. It maintains a huge military base and torture camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, against the wishes of the Cuban government and people. The US Southern Command has recently reactivated its Caribbean Fourth Fleet of warships, basically to intimidate Cuba and Venezuela.



Surrounded: Seven new US bases

In a March 2005 interview with *National Review* magazine, Otto Reich, a senior official in the George W. Bush administration, wrote: "[A] leftist-populist alliance is engulfing most of South America ... Our most pressing specific challenge is neutralizing or defeating the Cuba-Venezuela axis."

Under Obama there has been talk of a new relationship with Latin America, but in reality little has changed. For example, Obama accepted the legitimacy of the military coup in Honduras that that overthrew elected leftist president Manuel Zelaya. Honduras had joined the Venezuela and Cuba-led ALBA alliance.

## US blockade of Cuba

The US government calls it an "embargo". Cubans on the island call it a blockade: a ruthless economic war against a small Third World country that dares to defy the US corporate empire. Its aims were spelt out in a now-declassified State Department document dated April 6, 1960: "Every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life of Cuba ... to bring about hunger, desperation and the overthrow of [Cuba's revolutionary] government."

By cutting off all trade with Cuba, and by seeking to bribe or coerce other countries into doing the same, the US corporate elite hoped that the Cuban people could be persuaded to rise up against their own revolutionary government and allow the US marines to invade Cuba and install a pro-US puppet regime. A ban on US citizens traveling to Cuba would keep ordinary Americans ignorant of the suffering caused by this barbaric policy, and limit revenue from tourism.

But they underestimated the depth of popular support for Cuba's socialist revolution. Today, the Cuban Revolution continues to resist amid hardships and shortages caused by the US blockade. Every year the overwhelming majority of the UN General Assembly votes in favour of Cuba's resolution demanding the US lift its economic siege. Last year the vote was 187-3 in favour, with Israel voting with the US.

While Obama has made some minor changes to the travel ban — allowing Cuban-Americans to visit family in Cuba more frequently — the US economic siege of Cuba is still in full force.



Cuba: free of commercial advertising, abject poverty and McDonalds



Since Cuba's 1959 revolution led by Fidel Castro that overthrew a US-backed dictatorship, anti-Castro terrorist organisations based in Miami have carried out terrorist attacks against Cuba. Some 3400 Cubans have died as a result.

Terrorist organisations have been able to plan and execute such attacks with impunity, with US authorities either ignoring their illegal activities or actively supporting the terrorists. In the early 1990s Cuba sent five state security agents to the US to infiltrate the terrorist groups. These five courageous young men prevented numerous planned attacks and gave advance warning to Cuban authorities, saving both Cuban and US lives.

Seeking the cooperation of US authorities in the fight against terrorism, Cuba presented the US with information that should have led to the arrest of anti-Castro terrorists. But instead of arresting the real terrorists, they arrested the five Cuban anti-terrorists! The Five were held illegally in solitary confinement for 17 months, unable to prepare a proper legal defence. The 1998 trial was anything but fair: it was a politically motivated frame-up.

The Cuban Five are still imprisoned for the "crime" of anti-terrorism, sentenced to between 15 years and two lifetimes, and are unable to receive family visits. Their plight has inspired an international campaign to free them. Amnesty International has taken up their case. In Cuba, every sector of society has taken to the streets repeatedly to demand the release of their five heroes.

Free the Cuban Five!

# Get involved!



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